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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the condition of females in school administration and establishes baseline data for future analyses. Data were available from 54 school districts, but only 44 provided complete data for all years of the study (1972-86). Data were analyzed to determine what change had occurred in terms of the number and percentage of women who held line administrative positions in 1972, 1982, and 1986. The number of females increased in each time period and in each position except elementary assistant principal. Tables of results are provided. Results indicate that changes in the total number of positions accounted for the absence of an anticipated decline in male position holders as female position holders increased. Females were more likely to be found in elementary school administration than in secondary school administration; they were also more likely to be found in staff positions than in line positions in the central office. Appended are 13 references. (SI)

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THE CHANGING PROFILE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION

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THE CHANGING PROFILE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION

During the 1970's legislative and social pressure spoke to the relative absence of women in school administration. School districts were forced to acknowledge the long-standing disparity between the sex of line administrators (e.g., principals, superintendents) and teachers, the pool from which administrators are drawn. It was clear that females dominated teaching and males dominated administration. Indeed, females constituted 67 percent of teachers (88 percent in elementary school), but only 5 percent of the line administrators excluding elementary school (NEA, 1971).

Has the situation changed? Has the actual or even relative condition of females in line administration changed? A simple question, simply answered except for the absence of comprehensive, reliable, comparative national data (Yeakey, Johnston, and Adkison, 1986).

The 1971 and subsequent 1973 NEA salary surveys were the first full-scale, systematic documentation of position and gender in administrative positions. These statistics continue to be used as a comparative baseline (Ortiz, 1982; Jones and Montenegro, 1982), and even as a representation of the current situation (Porat, 1985).

There have been attempts to retrieve statistics from the past (Tyack, 1974; Dale, 1973; Gribskow, 1980) and to study the condition of women since 1973 (Scriven and Nunnery, 1975; McCarthy and Zent, 1981, 1982; Cunningham and Hentges, 1984).

Comparative assessments are rendered difficult, if not impossible, by differences in scope and the use of non-comparable categories.

The federal government has required school districts to file Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) reports by race and sex since 1974.

How school districts collect such data and what role the state departments of education play in that collection is not known. Data from these reports are available, however the reports aggregate data in categories that prevent analysis of individual positions. Administrative positions are combined into a single manager/administrator/director category.

The last year the federal government published administrative statistics by position was 1977 (NCES, 1977). The data have not been reported in subsequent anual reports about education.

In reflecting on the problems of documenting trends in the representation of women and minorities in school administration, Jones and Montenegro (1982) decried the limited samples used in most studies, the absence of standardized categories for reporting positions, and the failure of most state departments of education to collect and report such data. In addition, they reported that only twenty-four school districts and the District of Columbia had usable, reportable data about the sex and ethnicity of administrators.

The question remains, what is the condition of females in

school administration? Has it changed since the early seventies? The study sought an answer to the question and a process for establishing baseline data for future analyses.

Design

A study of all school districts in the nation would have been desirable, but was prohibitive. Thus a discrete group of school districts was selected, the large (student population), urban school districts. Several considerations guided this selection. First was their accessibility as an identifiable group. They belong to the Association of Large-City Superintendents. Second was the likelihood that these school districts collected and maintained data by position. Third was the assumption that since they serve large numbers of pupils and have large numbers of employees, if change had occurred, it was more likely to be visible in these districts. They have more administrative positions than most other kinds of school districts. They were more likely to have experienced movement in those positions and/or pressure from within and without to place women in administrative positions.

The fifty-eight school districts in the Association of Large-City Superintendents were asked to complete a form requesting statistics (number of positions, number of females) for each of nine line administrative positions for three points in time, 1972, 1982, and 1986. The positions for which statistics

were requested were superintendent, deputy and assistant superintendent, high school principal and assistant principal, middle school/junior high school principal and assistant principal, elementary school principal and assistant principal. Additional questions were asked about student enrollment during the period.

The year 1972 was chosen as the baseline date for data collection because national statistics were available for that year (NEA, 1973), and because it was the year the United States Congress passed Title IX, which required school districts to eliminate sex discrimination in education. While Title IX was passed in 1972, it took three years for compliance guidelines to be handed down by the Office for Civil Rights. Thus, 1972 pre-dated legislative pressure to appoint women to administrative positions. The year 1982 was chosen because it was ten years later and a time when legislative and social pressure to appoint women to administrative positions had clearly declined. Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-six was a recent point in time for the collection of statistics. A follow-up survey is planned for 1992.

Data were available for fifty-four school districts, but only forty-four of them provided complete data for all years. Forty-four matched pairs were used in the analysis (n=44).

Data were analyzed to determine what, if any, change had occurred in terms of the number and percent of women who held line administrative positions in 1972, 1982, and 1986. Data were

compared by position for 1972 and 1982, 1982 and 1986, 1972 and 1986. Paired t-tests were run to determine whether changes identified were statistically significant.

The data were examined to determine changes in the forty-four systems, changes within individual districts, and the statistical effect of districts with the largest number of positions. The latter was done to consider whether findings of significance identified were unduly influenced by the districts with the largest numbers.

Results

Table I shows the number and percent of females and males holding each position 1972, 1982, and 1986, in the forty-four school districts. The number of females increased in each time period (1972-1982, 1982-1986, 1972-1986) and in each position except one. The exception was assistant principal elementary school, a position that is far from universal. In that position the number of females declined in the period 1972-1982, but increased beyond the 1972 level in the period 1982-1986. By time period and position, the number of males did not necessarily decline in relation to increases in female office holders. Naturally, the percent of males holding each position in each time period declined.

Changes in the total number of positions accounted for the

Table I

Males and Females in Line Administrative Positions

POSITION	YEAR	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS	TOTAL POSITIONS	MALES	FEMALES	% FEMALE	% MALE
Superintendent	1972	43	43	43	0	0	100
	1982	43	43	39	4	9.3	90.7
	1986	44	44	37	7	15.9	84.1
Deputy Superintendent	1972	43	86	83	3	3.5	96.5
	1982	43	121	95	26	21.5	78.5
	1986	44	146	113	33	22.6	77.4
Assistant Superintendent	1972	43	276	254	22	7.9	92.1
	1982	44	292	231	61	20.9	79.1
	1986	44	264	196	68	25.8	74.2
Principal High School	1972	43	679	641	38	5.6	94.4
	1982	43	743	634	109	14.7	85.3
	1986	44	858	659	199	23.2	76.8
Assistant High School	1972	43	1388	1125	263	18.9	81.1
	1982	43	1715	1260	455	26.5	73.5
	1986	44	2494	1700	794	31.8	68.2
Principal Middle School	1972	41	861	782	79	9.2	90.8
	1982	41	966	801	165	17.1	82.9
	1986	44	1001	765	236	23.6	76.4
Assistant Middle School	1972	40	1485	1205	280	18.8	81.2
	1982	40	1467	1070	397	27.1	72.9
	1986	44	1719	1157	562	32.7	67.3
Principal Elementary School	1972	42	4435	2843	1592	36.0	64.0
	1982	42	3757	2286	1671	42.2	57.8
	1986	44	4074	2150	1924	47.2	52.8
Assistant Elementary School	1972	40	1472	778	694	47.1	52.9
	1982	42	1225	618	607	49.5	50.5
	1986	44	1587	700	887	55.9	44.1

absence of an anticipated decline in male position holders as female positions holders increased. The total number of positions increased 1972-1982. The exceptions were superintendent, assistant superintendent and elementary school principal. The total number of positions increased 1972-1986 in all positions except assistant superintendent. It increased 1972-1982, then declined slightly below the 1972 level 1982-1986. Variations showed up in the pattern of change in positions in the period 1972-1982, however increases in the number of positions in the categories deputy and assistant superintendent, high school principal and assistant principal, and middle school principal were especially notable.

While the increase in female positions holders is clearly shown in Table I, the continued dominance of males in all positions, except at the elementary school, is equally visible. At the elementary school, male and female office holders were close in number and percent with 52.8 percent of the principalships held by males and 55.9 percent of the assistant principalships held by females. In all other positions, females represented less than one-third of the office holders.

Table II presents the results of t-tests applied to change in the number of women holding administrative positions. It shows that the increases in females holding each position (except elementary assistant principal) were statistically significant at the .05 level 1972-1986 and 1972-1982. The increases were significant at the .05 level 1982-1986 in all but three

TABLE II

t-Test Results of the Increase of Women in Positions

POSITION	PERIOD UNDER CONSIDERATION	t VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM
Superintendent	1972-1982	-2.08 *	42
	1982-1986	-1.35	43
	1972-1986	-2.86 ***	42
Deputy Superintendent	1972-1982	-2.77 ***	25
	1982-1986	-0.98	31
	1972-1986	-2.85 ***	28
Assistant Superintendent	1972-1982	-6.27 ****	40
	1982-1986	-0.83	39
	1972-1986	-6.10 ****	38
Principal High School	1972-1982	-5.60 ****	42
	1982-1986	-6.30 ****	42
	1972-1986	-9.31 ****	42
Assistant High School	1972-1982	-6.71 ****	40
	1982-1986	-3.64 ****	41
	1972-1986	-8.33 ****	40
Principal Middle School	1972-1982	-5.96 ****	37
	1982-1986	-5.40 ****	38
	1972-1986	-8.74 ****	38
Assistant MIddle School	1972-1982	-6.42 ****	34
	1982-1986	-2.01 *	37
	1972-1986	-7.30 ****	34
Principal Elementary School	1972-1982	-3.11 ****	41
	1982-1986	-3.48 ****	41
	1972-1986	-5.59 ****	41
Assistant Elementary School	1972-1982	-0.30	25
	1982-1986	-2.11 *	28
	1972-1986	-1.37	25

* p <.05
** p <.01
*** p <.005
**** p <.001

positions, superintendent, deputy superintendent, and assistant superintendent, where the changes did not even approach significance.

Table III shows the total number of positions and the number and percent of each sex holding these positions by year. The table shows increases in numbers and percents of females holding line administrative positions over the fourteen-year span. The percent of females holding positions increased 5 percent 1972-1982, from 28 percent to 33 percent, and 6 percent 1982-1986, from 33 percent to 39 percent. The table not only shows clear, modest growth in the percent of females overall, but shows that the rate of growth increased over the periods studied. The average gain 1972-1982 was .5 percent a year. The average gain 1982-1986 was 1.5 percent a year.

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 compare the number of males and females by position and year. They show visually the trends in the sex of position holders for the period investigated. The figures show that the number of females holding each position 1972-1986 increased, yet males predominate in each position except in the elementary school.

Table IV shows changes in the total numbers of positions for each period. Since one superintendent per school district remains the rule, there was no change in this position. Change was evident in all other positions. In the period 1972-1986 there were increases in almost all positions. The increases were notable in the number of deputy superintendents, high school

TABLE III

Total Positions by Sex and Year

	1972	1982	1986
Total	10,725 (100%)	10,529 (100%)	12,127 (100%)
Women	2,971 (28%)	3,495 (33%)	4,710 (39%)
Men	7,754 (71%)	7,034 (67%)	7,477 (61%)

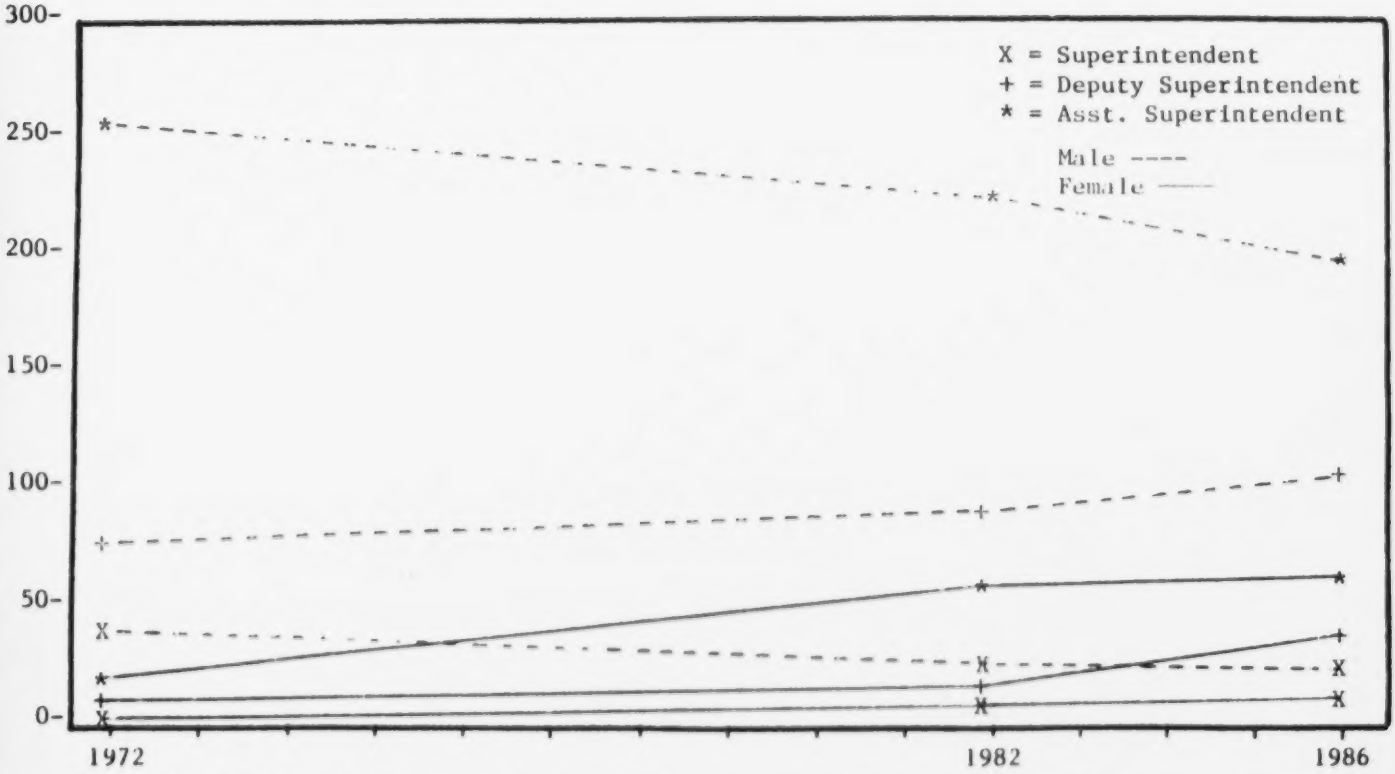

Figure 1. Total numbers of males and females in central office line administrative positions.

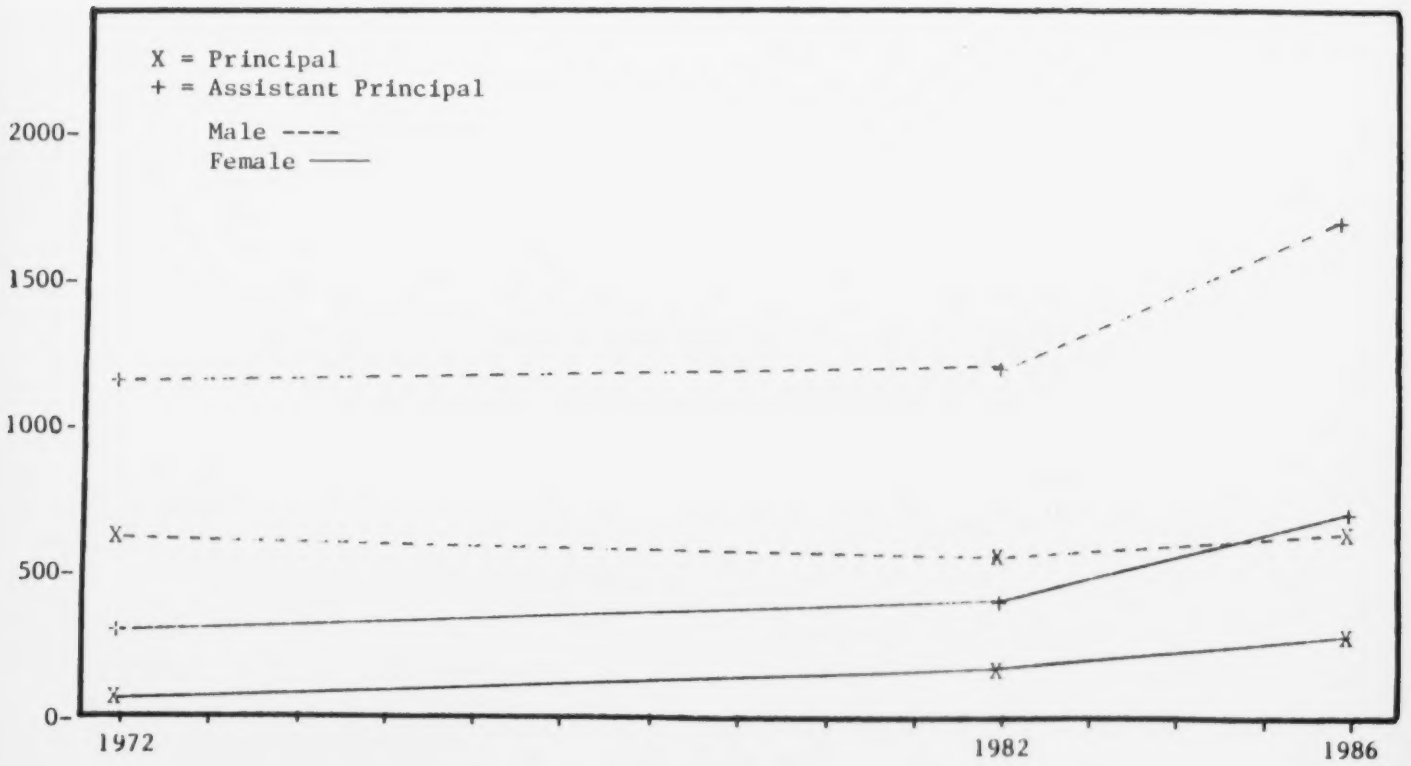

Figure 2. Total numbers of males and females in high school line administrative positions.

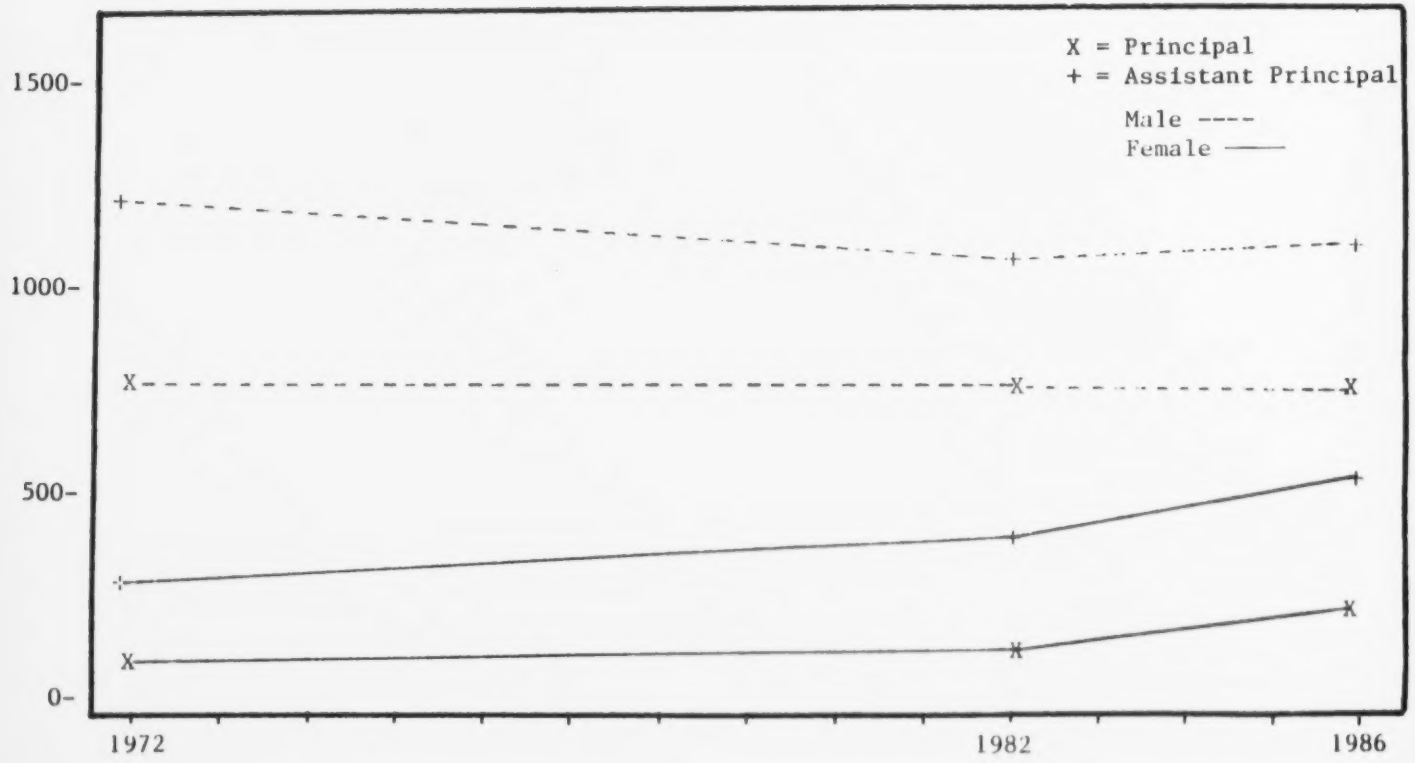

Figure 3. Total numbers of males and females in middle school line administrative positions.

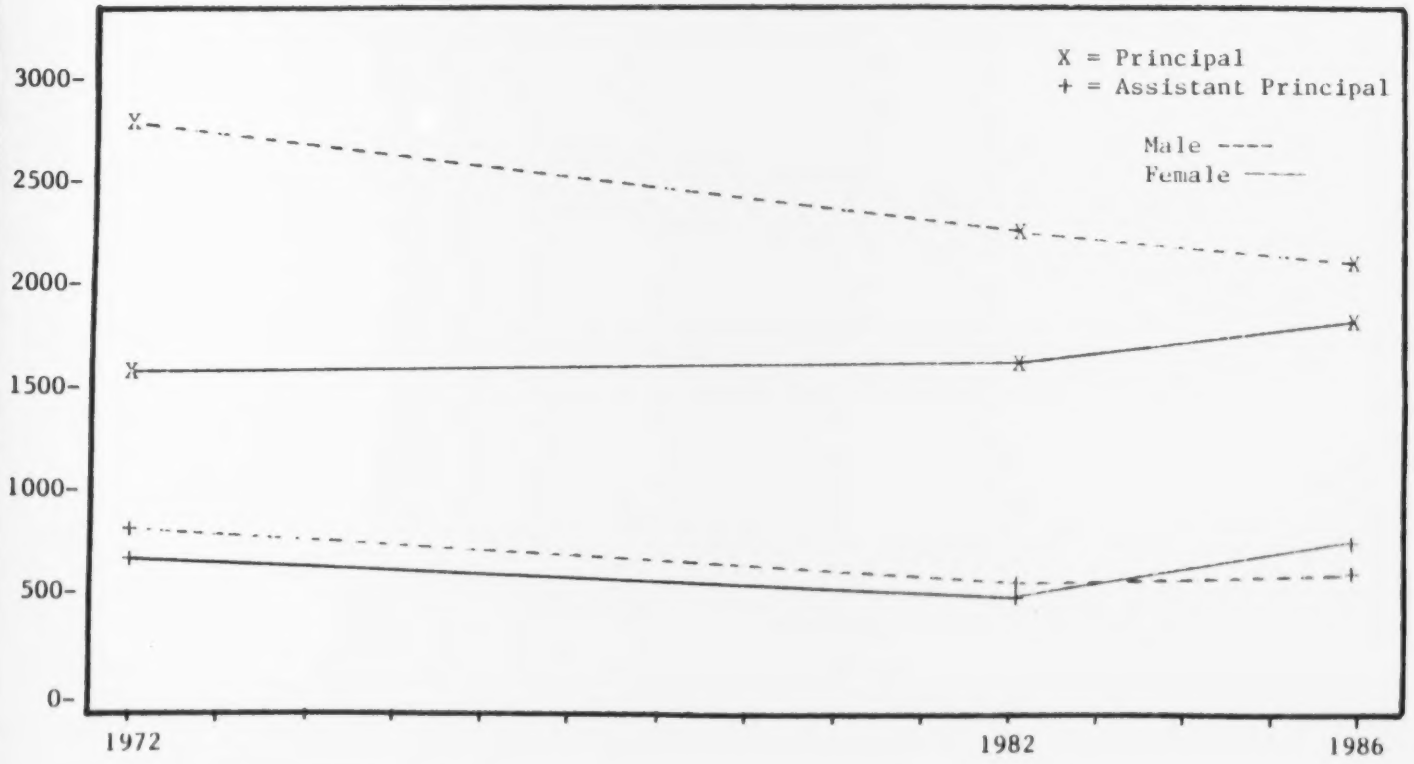

Figure 4. Total numbers of males and females in elementary school line administrative positions.

TABLE IV

Change in the Number of Positions

Position	1972-1982	1982-1986	1972-1986
Superintendent	0	0	0
Deputy Superintendent	+35	+25	+60
Asst. Superintendent	+16	-28	-12
High School Principal	+64	+115	+179
H S Asst. Principal	+327	+779	+1106
M S Principal	+105	+35	+140
M S Asst. Principal	-18	+252	+234
Elementary Principal	-178	+114	-61
El. Asst. Principal	-247	+362	+115

principals and assistant principals, middle school principals and assistant principals, and elementary school assistant principals. The disportionate increase in the number of high school assistant principals was particularly interesting. The decrease in assistant superintendant positions was most marked in the 1982-1986 period. There was a large decline in elementary principals 1972-1982, but their numbers increased 1982-1986.
The pattern of decline 1972-1982 and increase 1982-1986 is also visible in middle and elementary assistant principals and elementary principals.

To see if the results were unduly affected by large scale changes in a few districts, the results from the four districts with the greatest number of individuals in each position were compared with the results from the forty remaining districts. Table V shows the results of this comparison. The trend toward increased numbers and percents of females in each positions 1972-1986, is clearly stronger in the four systems pulled out in each category. However, the trend is still present in the forty remaining systems. Furthermore, over the period of time, in each position, the impact of these four districts lessens and the trend in the forty remaining systems increases in strength.

TABLE V

INFLUENCE OF THE FOUR LARGEST DISTRICTS

Position	Year	All Districts	Four Districts	
			Number	Percent
Deputy Superintendent	1972 (Total)	86	33	38
	1972 (Female)	3	3	100
	1982 (Total)	121	54	45
	1982 (Female)	26	19	73
	1986 (Total)	146	64	45
	1986 (Female)	33	21	64
Assistant Superintendent	1972 (Total)	276	147	53
	1972(Female)	22	15	68
	1982 (Total)	292	83	28
	1982 (Female)	61	20	33
	1986 (Total)	264	84	32
	1986 (Female)	68	21	31
Principal High School	1972 (Total)	679	174	26
	1972 (Female)	38	22	58
	1982 (Total)	743	211	28
	1982 (Female)	109	46	44
	1986 (Total)	858	240	28
	1986 (Female)	199	70	35
Assistant High School	1972 (Total)	1388	447	32
	1972 (Female)	263	145	48
	1982 (Total)	1715	555	32
	1982 (Female)	455	158	35
	1986 (Total)	2494	1196	48(39)*
	1986 (Female)	794	398	50

TABLE V (Continued)

Position	Year	All Districts	Four Districts	
			Number	Percent
Principal Middle School	1972 (Total)	861	289	34
	1972 (Female)	79	62	78
	1982 (Total)	966	312	32
	1982 (Female)	165	66	40
	1986 (Total)	1001	309	31
	1986 (Female)	236	69	29
Assistant Middle School	1972 (Total)	1485	851	57(41)*
	1972 (Female)	280	183	65(41)*
	1982 (Total)	1467	718	49(31)*
	1982 (Female)	397	172	43
	1986 (Total)	1719	800	47(32)*
	1986 (Female)	562	211	38
Principal Elementary School	1972 (Total)	4435	1102	25
	1972 (Female)	1592	433	27
	1982 (Total)	3957	1105	28
	1982 (Female)	1671	490	29
	1986 (Total)	4074	1147	28
	1986 (Female)	1924	538	28
Assistant Elementary School	1972 (Total)	1472	1136	77(51)*
	1972 (Female)	694	545	79(52)*
	1982 (Total)	1225	876	72(42)*
	1982 (Female)	607	436	72(32)*
	1986 (Total)	1587	1008	64
	1986 (Female)	887	556	63

* Percent of Total All Districts accounted for by one system.

Discussion

Data from forty-four of the largest school districts in the nation showed that the number and percent of females had increased in each position 1972-1986, that the increases were significant for every position except elementary assistant principal, and that the rate of increase was greater for the period 1982-1986 than for the period 1972-1982. They suggest a trend of increasing representation of females in line administrative positions. The trend is stronger in districts with the largest number of positions; but the trend is nonetheless strong and getting stronger in all of the districts. If size of district is any harbinger of things to come, if larger districts experience first some of the trends experienced by all districts, we can expect to see the trend played out nationally.

The period 1972-1982 was marked by social and legislative pressure to increase the number of females holding administrative positions. The period 1982-1986 saw a notable decline in that pressure. It is interesting that the rate of growth in females holding line administrative positions was greater after the decline in pressure (1.5 percent yearly, 1982-1986) than during (.5 percent yearly 1972-1982). This suggests that the increasing representation of women in administration, although still small, is a continuing phenomenon rather than an isolated, aberrant one.

Despite declining student enrollment in thirty-eight of the

forty-four school districts, there was a 14 percent increase in the total number of line administrative positions 1972-1986. The number of female position holders increased sharply (59 percent), but the number of male position holders declined only modestly (3.5 percent). The data raise some interesting speculative questions: (1) What accounts for increases in administrative positions at a time of declining enrollment? (2) What are the implications of increases in numbers of positions, increases in numbers of females appointed, and only a small decline in the number of male office holders?

Certain administrative positions are seen as critical to any consideration of change in the status of women in administration. Looked at historically and symptomatically, females were more likely to be found in elementary school administration than in secondary school administration; in staff positions (e.g. supervisor) rather than line positions in central office.

Increases in the number of females holding line administrative positions in the districts examined were accompanied by increases in appointment to positions outside elementary schools. In 1972, 77 percent of females holding administrative positions were placed in elementary schools, 65 percent by 1982, and 60 percent by 1986. The data suggest that women are gaining ground in securing appointment to positions traditionally held by males.

When increases in the number of females gaining positions 1972-1986 are considered in the light of changes in the number of

those positions, the areas of gain are clear: superintendent, assistant superintendent, high school and middle school principal, and middle school and elementary school assistant principal. All of these positions, except elementary school assistant principal, are traditionally associated with males and identified with upward mobility in administration. While the position of elementary school assistant principal is not generally associated with males, it is itself a relatively new position. The increases in females receiving appointment to these positions suggest a broadening of the opportunity base for females in administration. The movement of women into these positions, excluding perhaps elementary school assistant principal, provides substantive support for the idea of a changing profile in school administration.

Followup Research

In order to test the viability of conclusions suggested by this study, the authors are engaged in a followup study in which size/kind of district is the variable in question. The results of this followup study should help to determine whether the significant movement of women into line administrative positions found in the reported study is idiosyncratic to large city school districts or representative of a trend in the variety of school districts.

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